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131130Z Jul 05

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 07 TEL AVIV 004329

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TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Mideast

Key stories in the media:

All media led with a suicide bombing carried out in front of a Netanya shopping mall on Tuesday afternoon by an Islamic Jihad member from the village of Atil, near Tulkarm. Four women were killed and 90 other people were wounded, six of whom moderately to seriously. An hour earlier, another Palestinian drove a pickup loaded with cooking gas canisters into the West Bank settlement of Shavei Shomron. The charge detonated and he sustained serious burns. The media say that he was apparently abducted by Islamic Jihad, which suspected him of collaboration with Israel and chained him to the car. Ha'aretz reported that State Department Spokesman Tom Casey and White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan condemned the Netanya

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bombing. Quartet representative James Wolfensohn was quoted as saying in an interview with Israel Radio that it would be sad if the disengagement did not proceed. Israel Radio quoted Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as saying that he does not rule out the possibility that Iran was behind the Netanya attack.

The media reported that the Prime Minister's Office vowed a "heavy-handed response" to the two terrorist attacks, but that it would not specify when that response would occur, or what form it would take. This morning, Israel Radio reported that Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz warned Islamic Jihad that, as far as Israel is concerned, disengagement is a historic move, and that Israel will not allow Islamic Jihad to cause it to fail. The media reported that the PA condemned the attack. Israel Radio quoted senior GOI sources as saying that the PA has not done anything against terrorist elements. This morning, the radio quoted a spokesman for the PA's Interior Ministry as saying that the terrorist did not act in agreement with his group's leadership. Israel Radio reported that IDF forces entered Tulkarm last night for an unlimited period of time and arrested 15 Islamic Jihad militants, and that a closure was imposed on the territories. The radio said that an armed Palestinian was killed and another was wounded in clashes in Tulkarm last night. Two IDF soldiers were lightly wounded. Leading commentators, such as Zeev Schiff of Ha'aretz, do not rule out the resumption of targeted assassinations.

European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana was quoted as saying on Tuesday, in an interview with Jerusalem Post, that the EU is willing to serve as a third-party presence after Israel leaves the Gaza Strip. Solana said that in such a capacity, the EU would be responsible for customs control. The newspaper reported that, according to a source familiar with the security cabinet meeting held Wednesday night, Mofaz stated his opposition to the idea, saying that without a peace agreement, he did not want any third parties in Gaza. However, Jerusalem Post quoted Prime Minister's Office spokesman Raanan Gissin as saying that the government would need to discuss the matter.

All media reported that cabinet secretary Israel Maimon told Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin on Tuesday that the final agreement between Egypt and Israel on the

deployment of 750 Egyptian troops along the Philadelphia route will be presented to the Knesset after the cabinet has voted on it. The media cited Sharon's confidence that the Knesset would pass such a bill.

This morning, Israel Radio reported that Sharon closed off the Gaza Strip to Israelis who do not officially reside in Gush Katif through the conclusion of the disengagement move. The media had assumed that such a step would be taken to block next week's massive three-day anti-disengagement march. Israel Radio and other media reported that the Council of Jewish settlements in the Territories issued a statement saying: "This is the first time that a Jewish prime minister declares a siege on Jewish communities." The media reported that the right-wing group Habayit Haleumi (National Home), vowed to block roads countrywide every Monday and Wednesday until Sharon rescinds his order.

The major Hebrew-language dailies reported that Shin Bet representatives told the Knesset's Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee on Tuesday that it has arrested 30 right-wing activists over the past few weeks on suspicion of conspiracy to commit crimes and endangering human life. The media reported that Noam Livnat, brother of Education Minister Limor Livnat and an anti-disengagement leader, was arrested on Tuesday in the Gaza settlement of Shirat Hayam, following a violent confrontation between supporters and police.

Ha'aretz and other media reported that IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz and another senior officer denied Tuesday that there is any link between the July 7 bombings in London and the April 2003 bombing of the Mike's Place pub in Tel Aviv.

Maariv reported that, contrary to claims by Gush Katif farmers that the Evacuation-Disengagement Law will discriminate against them, the government has reached an agreement with the state, in which each of them will receive 67 dunams (around 15 acres) of land near Hatzerim in the Negev, as well as land that Kibbutz Zikim, near Ashkelon, sold to the state for Gush Katif evacuees.

Jerusalem Post quoted Israeli military sources as saying that a Hizbullah gunman opened fire at an IDF outpost in the area of Rosh Hanikra, near the Mediterranean Sea, on Tuesday evening, without causing any casualties or damage.

Israel Radio reported that a delegation of Shas and "rebel" Likud Knesset members who were holding talks in London with senior Palestinians, including chief PA negotiator Saeb Erekat, interrupted those contacts following the Netanyahu bombing.

The media reported on Tuesday's assassination attempt against Lebanon's pro-Syrian outgoing Deputy PM Elias Murr.

Ha'aretz and Jerusalem Post published some results from a survey of American attitudes toward Israel and the Middle East, conducted [on June 19-23] by the Marttila Communications Group, which the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) released on Tuesday:

- 71 percent of Americans polled expressed support for the disengagement plan.
- 52 percent believed Israel was working harder for peace than the Palestinians.
- 43 percent said they sympathized with Israel.
- 68 percent said they thought Palestinians were serious about peace negotiations, up from 62 percent in the previous survey [conducted in March].

The newspapers write that a parallel survey of European attitudes by the ADL produced different results, with Israel and Sharon receiving low rates of support.

Mideast:

Summary:

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Israel says Abbas has already stopped saying he wants to confront terrorism but cannot to do so, and suffices with displaying his impotence."

Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "[Islamic Jihad] made a strategic decision to undermine the disengagement process and try to drag Hamas back into the armed confrontation with Israel."

Military correspondent Amos Harel wrote on page one of Ha'aretz: "The value of the pledges given in Cairo and Damascus was made clear Tuesday in Netanya: Islamic Jihad ... went back to perpetrating suicide bombings in Israel."

Editor-in-Chief Amnon Dankner wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv: "Tuesday's terror attacks should remind us all that in a moment we were liable to forget all this, to forget the fact that the real, dark and murderous threat lurks around us and not within us."

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "The lack of ... inter-Palestinian physical conflict can only suggest a high degree of ideological agreement."

Ha'aretz editorialized: "The government's decision Sunday to speed up preparations for completing the 'Jerusalem envelope' project exposes anew the attempt to use the security fence for issues that have no connection to the security of the citizens of Israel."

Block Quotes:

I. "Abbas's Final Test"

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (July 13): "The suicide bombing Tuesday in Netanya may be Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas's final test, a senior Israeli official said Tuesday night.... The terrorist attack further erodes Abbas's standing among the Palestinians, and Israeli officials are asking whether the Palestinians have reached the stage of ignoring his leadership, [the official] said.... Israel says Abbas has already stopped saying he wants to confront terrorism but cannot to do so, and suffices with displaying his impotence. His calls for Israeli aid are increasingly dwindling away, as is international pressure on Israel that could strengthen him. Israel interprets this as increased American recognition that there is no medicine that would save Abbas' weak regime.... Israeli officials say that perhaps the bombing will shake Abbas up and that maybe this time he will regain his composure and try to bring the situation under control but it would be tough to say they genuinely expect this to happen.... The security reforms Abbas has promised have yet to take effect. American security coordinator Lieutenant General William E. Ward is trying to strengthen PA Interior Minister Nasser Yousef's position, and is pressuring Israel to treat him with respect and meet with him. Ward insists on operating within the Palestinian chain of command. People familiar with how Ward works say he has difficulty accepting the lack of hierarchy in the PA."

II. "Islamic Jihad Is New Hamas"

Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (July 13): "As a rule, we are living in a very shaky model of calm. On the Palestinian side, it is a model filled with internal contradictions. There is a public commitment there to restrain terror, but complete impotence in the war against the recalcitrant organizations. Four days ago, the Palestinian President went to Canossa. He invited himself to Damascus to meet with the leaders of the rejectionist organizations, headed by Islamic Jihad. The Syrians held a lunch in his honor, and to mock him invited Abu Musa -- the leader of the Fatah rebels organization -- to the meal. Abu Mazen [Mahmoud Abbas] requested of the leaders of the organizations and from the Syrians to halt the military activity and help him with the calm. Tuesday's terror attacks are the response: they simply spat in his face. Indeed, most of the terror attacks that are currently being carried out -- in the West Bank or in Gaza -- are staged by Islamic Jihad. This organization made a strategic decision to undermine the disengagement process and try to drag Hamas back into the armed confrontation with Israel.... On the Israeli side, the meaning of the shaky model of calm is taking chances in order to enable a process at the conclusion of which disengagement will not be carried out under fire."

III. "The Value of an Islamic Jihad Pledge"

Military correspondent Amos Harel wrote on page one of Ha'aretz (July 13): "At the beginning of the month, a senior Damascus-based Islamic Jihad figure was summoned

to Cairo.... Egyptian Intelligence Minister Omar Suleiman, who met the man from Damascus, expressed concern over the organization's wild behavior of the past few weeks.... The Egyptians left the meeting encouraged: while the Islamic Jihad leader did not actually pledge to stop the attacks [against Israel], he hinted that his organization would try to make do with actions in the territories. But the Egyptians are not the only country mixing in Palestinian Authority affairs. Last Friday, Syrian President Bashar Assad hosted PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas and the heads of a number of Palestinian terror organizations at his palace in Damascus. The latter made do with a general promise to reign in their activities, if Israel would avoid military actions. Abbas, Israeli intelligence sources say, put no real pressure on the organizations to back up their words. The value of the pledges given in Cairo and Damascus was made clear Tuesday in Netanya: Islamic Jihad, whose leader Dr. Ramadan Shalah took part in the Damascus meeting, went back to perpetrating suicide bombings in Israel."

IV. "The Real Enemy"

Editor-in-Chief Amnon Dankner wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv (July 13): "Tuesday's terror attacks should remind us, after a period of calm, that we have not yet reached a situation where we have no enemies and it is so calm around us that we should cultivate and sanctify internal conflicts, quarrels and rifts within the people.... Who knows how many more victims will yet pay with their lives and the wholeness of their bodies until the end of the disengagement process, and who knows how many the cruel and reprehensible Palestinian terror will yet take from us? There is no justification in the world for us to add bereavement, injury, tears, and hurt with our own hands and among ourselves. We are a nation that has known how to stand united against outside threats, even during fierce internal debate. We have always known how to fight the enemy and defend ourselves against it in a united fashion even when there were different approaches and ideological clashes among us. Tuesday's terror attacks should remind us all that in a moment we were liable to forget all this, to forget the fact that the real, dark and murderous threat lurks around us and not within us."

V. "Palestinian Responsibility"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (July 13): "Even if Mahmoud Abbas's effort to sweet talk the terrorists into ending their attacks were considered a legitimate attempt, it must be deemed to have failed.... The Palestinian leadership would have the world believe that it, too, has embarked on a creative enterprise, in contrast to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, who seek to destroy Israel through terrorism. But Abbas's refusal to touch, let alone dismantle, the infrastructure of terrorism that he has committed to eliminating destroys that contention. His refusal to act led directly to yesterday's terror attacks and places full responsibility for them on his doorstep. This refusal also renders irrelevant any purported difference between him and the 'rejectionist' groups.... The lack of ... inter-Palestinian physical conflict can only suggest a high degree of ideological agreement.... The international community must help Israel make the Palestinians understand that terrorism will neither build them a state nor destroy ours. There is no excuse for continuing to 'help Abu Mazen' when such 'help' only encourages him to stay on the unacceptable course he is on. The refusal to recognize this will only cost more Israeli and Palestinian lives."

VI. "Sharon Is Dividing Jerusalem"

Ha'aretz editorialized (July 13): "The government's decision Sunday to speed up preparations for completing the 'Jerusalem envelope' project exposes anew the attempt to use the security fence for issues that have no connection to the security of the citizens of Israel. In a statement to the High Court of Justice, the state prosecution did not hide that the government is taking political, and not just security, considerations into account.... The concrete walls, which will further disrupt the close connection with East Jerusalem residents on the social, political and economic front, are likely to increase their hostility toward the State of Israel and their motivation to harm its citizens.... Ehud Barak was the first Israeli leader who put the borders of Jerusalem on the political agenda. [Actually,] Ariel Sharon is the first Israeli leader who has proven, in an official government decision, that the borders established

hastily and arbitrarily in 1967 are not sacred."

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